

A look at – IT's Help Desk, Technical Support and Web Development

From the time you turn on your computer in the morning to when you shut down at the end of the workday, you cannot help but be aware of the staff in system support in IT. This month we are visiting with the people who answer questions through the Help Desk, make up the technical support team that keep the PCs and servers up and running and make information appear on the agency's Internet and Intranet Web sites.

IT Help Desk

"From quiet to frantic" is how Candy Trapp describes the routine on the Help Desk. When employees call in for assistance, the first thing that must be determined is where the problem really is – with the PC, with the network server or maybe even the telephone system, she said.

A common problem reported by employees is the inability to get logged back onto their computer after being locked out. Most users don't have their personal USERID or the domain memorized if those boxes come up blank when they try to log on, she said. And while many hiccups on the computer can be overcome by a reboot process (control-alt-delete or turning off the power to the CPU – that big box that is probably sitting under your desk), many users don't realize that turning off the power switch on the monitor does not turn off the computer.

"Terminology is the biggest problem faced by the Help Desk. Everyone is at a different

technological level and we often don't use the correct or even the same terms for computer issues, so I have to be sure I understand what they are trying to explain to me," Trapp said. "Sometimes it is just the difference between a forward slash (/) and a back slash (\) in an Internet address that makes all the difference.

"There are no 'stupid' questions. We are going to help you find a solution, whether over the phone or by sending a tech to your office," she said.

The Help Desk also provides support to others outside KDOL that have limited access to the agency's computer mainframe, such as SRS, the Kansas Department of Commerce and the IRS. The Help Desk assists employers who are having difficulty logging on to the mainframe UI system.

Other tasks include coordination of the setup of computers and phones for new employees, and for the consultants working on the UIM project. There are many office moves – exchanges of cubicles and promotions – which

require preparing for the move of a computer and telephone assignment.

Some staff use two separate computer systems on a regular basis. The second PC is usually for use with a specific federal program, such as connections with the U.S. Department of Labor for LMIS and with OSHA by Industrial Safety and Health employees.

Additionally, the Help Desk is responsible for the IT purchase requests for computers, software and printers used throughout KDOL. They maintain the library of software for KDOL techs, including storing the original copy and all the license agreements needed so that multiple copies of the software can be used.

Technical Support

Three technicians each in the two technical areas – PC and server – keep individual desktop PCs and the various network servers up and running.

"All issues are important to us, whether it is a mission critical that is down or

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System Support: (left to right) Eric Bayena, Dave Welton, Mike Vasquez, Candy Trapp, Mike Kennedy, Joe Minger, Alex Hoover. Not pictured: Danny Kuckelman and Kevin Stallbaumer.

Donate the Gift of Life

by **Gerald Schneider,**
Chief Financial Officer



It is estimated that only about five percent of the people who are eligible to donate blood do so.

I'm among that five percent. Are you?

The need for blood and blood products is great. Accidents, injuries and major surgery require a constant supply. And then there are the people who have an illness that causes bleeding, such as a bleeding ulcer, or one that destroys blood cells who are in need of frequent transfusions. Statistics show that about 95 percent of people who live to age 72 will need a blood transfusion at some time in their life.

Over the years, I have donated some 67 pints of blood to help with these needs. That's more than eight gallons. Here at KDOL, we have employees who have donated more than 10 gallons of their blood. We also are a little better than the national average, with about seven percent of staff donating on a regular basis.

My doctor tells me that donating blood is actually good for you. It stimulates the generation of red blood cells.

This means not only are you helping someone else but you also are doing something that makes you a healthier person.

Millions of times each year in the United States, human blood is required to save the lives of people suffering from accidents and disease. There is no way to manufacture human blood outside the body. Donating blood is one of the easiest ways to support your community. Your donation will save the life of an individual right here, right now.

It is a simple process, whether you do it at a KDOL blood drive or go to a blood bank when you hear of an emergency need. There are only three things you need to be eligible – be 17 years old or older, weigh 110 pounds or more and be generally in good health.

It's just as easy when you get there.

Step 1 - Registration

You will be asked to show a photo ID and enter your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and date of birth into the record. The Topeka Community Blood Center will send you a Blood Donor Card and your cholesterol results.

Step 2 - Donor History

The registration staff will provide you with a questionnaire to complete regarding your personal history. The questionnaire is designed to ensure your safety and the safety of the blood supply. It is important to complete the questionnaire thoroughly and honestly. All responses are confidential.

Step 3 - History Review and Mini-physical

The collection staff will review the questionnaire and conduct a mini-physical by checking your pulse, blood pressure, temperature and hemoglobin. All of this is done to ensure that you are physically able to donate blood.

Step 4 - Donation

A phlebotomist will direct you to a donation bed and prepare your arm with a disinfecting scrub. A single-use sterile needle is used to draw your blood; you will feel a little pinch. The actual donation takes only ten to fifteen minutes.


Step 5 - Refreshments

After completing the donation you will be escorted to the refreshment area for cookies and beverages. After resting a few minutes you're on your way.

The entire process – from the moment you are greeted to the moment you are ready to leave – takes approximately one hour. Executive Order No. 2001-02 created a new category of paid leave for state employees in the executive agencies to provide paid leave for state employees who chose to donate organs, tissue, bone marrow, blood or blood products. You may receive up to 1.5 hours of paid leave every four months to donate blood under the "Kansas Donor Leave Program." Check with HR about how to code your time sheet.

Assuring the safety of the blood supply is a high-tech process requiring at least nine specific tests; proper processing, labeling, and storage; and vigilant quality control. Routine donations are tested for HIV and Hepatitis C.

To find out more about where and when you can donate your precious gift of life, please contact the Topeka Community Blood Center at 785-233-0195 (www.BloodIsLife.org), the American Red Cross at 1-800-448-3543 (www.redcross.org/br/centralplains), your local hospital or sign up for a KDOL blood drive. **The next one is Friday, May 5 in Topeka.** Contact Sandy Lassley in HR (785-296-6673) for more information.

And seriously consider donating. You will feel good about it. 

Staff Profile – Jennifer Wise

This month we begin a series of profiles on the people who are involved with the UIM project

Jennifer Wise, Public Service Administrator II, is a subject matter expert and business analyst for the UIM project. When not working full time on the project, she is the Inquiry Team Supervisor in the Topeka Call Center.

What is your role with the UIM project? I began the project as a subject matter expert. Over time, I also have worked into the role of a business analyst. As a business analyst, I am responsible for documenting the new processes in diagrams (models) using tools such as “WebSphere Business Modeler.”

How long have you been involved in UIM? Since April 2005

What do you see as the major importance/benefit of the project? Better support to our customers through assisted self-service. We currently are working in the To-Be phase and the team is really looking at the processes from a “customer” perspective. In our personal lives, we have assisted self-service with

banking, credit cards and utilities. The thought of providing these same self-service capabilities to our claimants and employers is exciting.

From your perspective, what need(s) of KDOL will the project meet? I believe we will have more streamline processes to assist our customers, both internal and external. Better processes do not mean fewer staff. I truly believe that the project will eliminate mundane tasks that will free up staff to perform the important ones, which will lead to better customer service.

What has been your principle challenge with the project? The concept of “thinking outside the box” has been a challenge for me. I know the processes as they are today and to think of new, better ways of performing tasks can be difficult. I have had to familiarize myself with the different technologies that exist today in order to help me find ways to “think outside the box” and to possibly improve our processes.

How is the project going? I believe the project is going very well. IBM and KDOL have merged into one strong team, which has helped in developing new ideas on how to



conduct KDOL business with our customers.

What have you learned about KDOL operations

that you didn’t know before the UIM project began? I have learned so much about each department’s processes and how they play an intricate role in KDOL. One example, with Shane Cox as part of the Core Team, I have learned so much about the contribution processes. The learning process is exciting! ★

UIM Project Status Update

The UIM project has entered the next stage of the project, dedicated to defining how KDOL will perform its operations in the future. The stage is referred to as the “to-be.”

Leadership from UI will work collaboratively with IBM to design a new business model during this stage. Input will be gathered from claimants, employers, and other key stakeholders, and reviewed along with industry best practices to shape the new business model. This process is called Business Process Reengineering, or BPR. ★

What Do You Want to Know about UIM?

Many of the frequently asked questions about the UIM project are answered on the KDOL Employee Intranet at http://www.dol.ks.gov/intra/uim/uim_project.htm. If you have any other questions, they can be e-mailed to UIM@dol.ks.gov. Members of the Project Team will post answers to questions every week.

Some recent questions and answers

which have been addressed on the Intranet include:

- How will this project affect me?
- Is there going to be a layoff?
- Will we have to do more furloughs as a result of this project?
- Will we see workshare in the future? ★

It's Still Flu Season

Influenza, or more commonly – flu, is a contagious disease caused by a virus. When influenza attacks the lungs, the lining of the respiratory tract is damaged. The tissues temporarily become swollen and inflamed but usually heal within two or more weeks. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately five to 20 percent of U.S. residents get the flu and more than 200,000 persons are hospitalized for flu-related complications each year. The cost to the economy runs into the billions from medical expenses and lost productivity.

The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

To prevent the spread of the flu, a cold and other similar diseases, the CDC recommends:

Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

Clean your hands often. When available, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then


touches their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for two hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed. When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed. Remember: Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches, and
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (much more common among children than adults).

Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during flu season and all year long. Keep your distance when you are sick or if you are around someone else who is sick.

If you were unable to get your flu shot this year, it is more important than ever to be vigilant and take some simple steps to help prevent the spread of the flu. One gift you can give others is to help prevent other people from catching your flu. Remember, you can still spread germs up to seven days after getting sick. Following these simple steps for up to a week after getting sick will help to reduce the chances of spreading the flu.

For additional information, you may visit the flu Web sites of the CDC or KDHE. 

Tuition Reimbursement - Reducing the Cost of Your Education


During calendar year 2005, KDOL reimbursed more than \$9,000 to employees utilizing our Tuition Reimbursement program. We have had employees taking classes in accelerated programs, Master's and Bachelor's degree programs and at community colleges. If you are taking classes and not taking advantage of this program, contact Tammy Schmidt in Human Resources (785-296-5004, tammy.schmidt@dol.ks.gov) to find out if your next class could be eligible for reimbursement.

Who is eligible? KDOL benefit-eligible employees who have been with the agency for six months (and, when applicable, passed initial probation).

What type of classes are approved? Your class must be of some benefit to KDOL – not necessarily your current position. Many English classes, business classes and communication classes will be approved. If you have any doubts about whether your class would be approved, contact HR.

Isn't the process difficult? No. Simply submit your Application for Education Assistance and Reimbursement to HR via your director prior to the start of class. Upon finishing the class, submit a copy of your grades and a copy of a receipt showing what YOU paid for the class. Your documentation will be processed and sent to Fiscal for your check to be cut.

Can I participate in the program if I am receiving student loans? Yes, student loans will not impact the amount that you can be reimbursed, but grants or scholarships can. That is why your receipt needs to show what you paid.

See directive: <http://www.dol.ks.gov/intra/pers/html/educadir.htm> for more information. 

Were You Injured on the Job?

Do you know what to do if you or someone you supervise gets hurt on the job? There is help available on the KDOL employee Intranet in the HR - Supervisory Aids & Resources site under "On the Job Injuries" <http://www.dol.ks.gov/Intra/pers/html/handbook/supervisor/suindex.htm>.

An injured worker first should seek medical care, if necessary. Employees who are injured on the job should report to a managed care facility, if there is one designated in their area. Otherwise, employees are to go to their Primary Care Physician or to the emergency room at the local hospital. A list of the managed care facilities and their locations is available on the intranet site.

Injured workers should report their injury to their supervisor immediately. Failure to notify their employer within 10 days of the accident could jeopardize workers compensation benefits. Employees are encouraged to keep the HR office informed about any changes in their status. This includes changes in work restrictions, missing work or returning to work.

Time away from work should be reported as sick leave, even though an employee may be entitled to workers compensation. Contacting HR will ensure proper payroll adjustments can be made in a timely manner when applicable.

Employees who sustain compensable

injuries from an accidental injury or occupational disease **may** be entitled to medical treatment expenses to treat the job related injury or illness; disability compensation to replace part of the wages lost due to a disability; and survivors benefits if death results.

The State of Kansas is self insured for its workers compensation coverage and the Self-Insurance Fund (SSIF) administers workers compensation claims on behalf of State of Kansas employees.

Please contact Chris Anderson or Debbie Gassert in HR, if you have additional questions or need further assistance following an on-the-job injury. ★

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that your personal desktop computer is not working correctly," said Supervisor Danny Kuckelman.

Most KDOL employees have a computer – whether it's a CPU on their desk or a laptop used on the road. Keeping them running and connected is the task of the Technical Support group. "While most users report to an office to use the computer, some employees, such as the safety and health consultants in IS&H, work offsite, from their home or their car across the state," he noted.

Planning for moves and new hires as well as the routine replacement of CPUs is all in a day's work for the technicians in PC support. "KDOL replaces most PCs on a three-year plan. However, our techs don't just unbox the new computer and deliver it to a user's desk or office," Kuckelman said. "The new system must be configured to work on its network and the proper software must be installed and tested before it is taken to its new user."

If there is a problem with a PC or its software, the corrective action might be taken by a tech on site, or it might be checked by a "remote in." The Help Desk or a tech can logon to your computer with you and view or control what you are doing to help solve the problem.

KDOL has network servers in each of its buildings plus backup systems to maintain integrity and to assure that important information is not lost. "We strongly encourage users to save their work to the network drive, either personal or a shared drive, rather than saving work to their own PC on the C: drive. If something should happen to their PC, such as damage from a power surge, we might not be able to recover what is on the C: drive, but would have any work on the network drives backed up so that it could be restored," Kuckelman said.

Technical Support is in the process of developing a FAQ – frequently asked questions – page for the Intranet.

Web Development

Steve McAtee and Heather Ice are

kept busy with Web development. Their work appears on the KDOL Internet – the public site – and the KDOL Intranet – the site for employees only. They work with UI to keep



Steve McAtee and Heather Ice work with the KDOL Web site.

the information and forms for both employers and unemployed workers current, with LMIS to update statistical information on the Web site and with Communications to bring you the *Inside Source* each month.

They take documents, reports and forms and turn them into Web pages, create the menus and navigation that

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Look who's SHARP – LakePoint Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

In 2005, the leading cause of occupational injuries in Kansas was lifting. There were a total of 7,410 such injuries, including one that led to a fatality.

Back injuries caused by lifting is the number one safety problem for LakePoint Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in El Dorado, too. In Kansas last year, nursing care facilities were in the top ten industry classifications with most frequent injuries.

According to Darrell Markley, administrator at the facility, their major safety hazard is lifting residents. Through work with KDOL safety and health consultants, LakePoint was able to establish lifting and transferring training programs that have reduced accidents.

LakePoint in El Dorado joined the



SHARP program in 2005. There are three other facilities in Augusta, Rose Hill and Wichita that are not yet in SHARP.

“Our employees are important to us, so we want them to work safely,” Markley said. There are more than 90

employees at the El Dorado nursing facility. But safety is something that must be addressed by both management and employees. “Safety is everyone’s responsibility at LakePoint,” he noted.

“Our goal is to reduce accidents in 2006 by 25 percent,” Markley said. ★

Safety Notes by Terri Sanchez, Safety Consultant

Bound to Your Desk? These Exercises will Help

In today’s world, some of us literally sit all day. Our backs and necks were never meant to be this inactive. All too often we accept the minor aches and almost constant nagging of tight, weak and “bored” muscles as part of the job or we say “I’m just getting old.”

It doesn’t have to be this way. You should take time out during your work day to exercise, stretch and change position. You will get more done and feel better after doing it.

Make sure your work station is set up to reduce fatigue. Readjust your chair between each work task. That is why we have chairs with easily accessible adjustments. Check your posture to make sure you are not slumping. Take an inventory of what feels tight or sore on a regular basis. Chances are that area needs to be stretched.

It does not take much time to release built up stress. Try this short routine:

- Get the energy flowing by taking a couple of deep breaths.
- Pull your shoulders down and gently lower your ear to your shoulder each way. Hold for a count of five. Repeat three times.
- Stretch your arms over head and interlock your fingers with the palms turned up. Push your arms back slightly. Bend from your waist. Hold the stretch a few seconds each.
- Sit or stand and raise your elbows out to each side level with your shoulders. Bending your elbow 90 degrees, place your forearms straight up. Now squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold that stretch for a few seconds. This

opens up the chest and counteracts the “slumping” strain we get in our neck, shoulders and upper back.

- Stand and place your hands behind your low back. Stretch back your upper body. Hold for 10 seconds.
- Use your arm to pull the other elbow over to its opposite shoulder. Repeat on the other side. Hold the stretch until you feel relief.
- Tighten your hands into fists, hold for a count of five then open and shake your fingers down at your side. Repeat three times.
- Take a short walk at lunch. Swing your arms.

Not only will you feel better at work, but you will have more energy and feel better for the things you want to do after work. ★

Employee Updates

New Employees

Lon Green is a new state auditor II in UI Tax in Overland Park. He is a native of the Bronx, NY, and attended City University of New York Hunter College. He and his wife, Kody, have two children.

Sherry Hutcheson is a new state auditor II in UI in Wichita. She is a Colorado native who graduated from the University of Wyoming. She and her husband, Willy, have two sons and six grandchildren.

Do you have an achievement or an honor (personal or professional) you would like to share? Please submit it to sue.henke@dol.ks.gov. Items used will be determined by Communications and are subject to editing and space availability.

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Compliments

Betty White & Heather Wilke, Legal Services

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the long, tiring, difficult, discouraging journey we shared. Ms. White, you gave me the courage not to give up and stay on course. Ms. Wilke, you took over a case that had been a difficult one and had been problematic for years.

I write this note to you both to show my appreciation and a job well done. Again, thank you, thank you, thank you. You gave me hope and made a difference in my life.

~ A customer

Attention

The last day to use excess vacation leave accrual is June 16. For those with overage, up to 40 hours of excess vacation time will be converted to sick leave.

Service Awards

April 2006

20 years

Edward Phelps Special Investigator I, Integrity - Manhattan

30 years

Chad Lopez Special Investigator II, Integrity -Topeka

Cheryl Forbes Computer Operations Supv., Information Systems

40 years

James Huttenhoff Labor Conciliator, Employment Standards

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allow you to find the information you need to use the KDOL Web sites. Their goal, McAtee said, is to create pages that are "attractive, clean, dignified, easy to use and accessible."

The information which appears on the Web is determined by the division or unit responsible for the information

and then it is signed off on by Communications before it is placed online. Web development staff often develop an off line test page for the requester to review.

Web design is an ever-changing field, he said. "The nature of what is considered good Web design

is continually changing, even the page coding is changing – but this is making it simpler to make global changes, such as to the font or backgrounds, with a few keystrokes. You still need to know html language, but the new software makes it simpler to set up a page and to bring in databases," McAtee said.